

CRIME, RECENT, RECOMMENDED, SOCIAL SCIENCE

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# Are We in the Midst of a Transgender Murder Epidemic?

written by Wilfred Reilly



The claim that there’s an “epidemic” of fatal anti-transgender violence in the United States has been made widely in recent years. A Google search for the phrase “epidemic of anti-trans violence” turns up pieces from the *New York Times*, NBC National News, ABC National News, and the Human Rights Campaign, a leading LGBT lobby group—among 2,500,000 other results. The HRC’s primary on-point article was headlined ‘A National Epidemic: Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence,’ while the *Times* led with ‘Eighteen Transgender Killings This Year Raise Fears of an Epidemic.’ Transgender Day of Remembrance has been celebrated since the late 1990s to honor those

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“members of the transgender community whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence,” and the American Medical Association has stated on record that fatal attacks on transgender people—particularly minority trans women—constitute a large part of an “epidemic of violence” against the trans community.

However, there is remarkably little evidence that transgender Americans are killed at an unusually high rate. According to an exhaustive database kept by the HRC, there were 29 recorded murders of trans individuals in the most violent recent year on record (2017), a fraction of the 17,294 murders committed that year. In fact, the transgender murder rate is far lower than the murder rates for African Americans, poor Americans of all races, and “men” in general. Further, most murders of trans persons are same-race domestic or personal disputes, not hate crimes.

In the *Times* article, authors Rick Rojas and Vanessa Swales open their piece by noting that in 2019 “at least 18 trans persons” have been murdered “in a wave of violence that the American Medical Association has declared an epidemic.” According to the article, trans people—in particular trans women—have been shot, beaten, found dead in lakes, and even “burned beyond recognition.” Further, the situation seems to be getting worse: the *Times* journalists note that “many” say hostility toward trans people has intensified “as a rise in visibility has stirred animosity, and motivated people to attack.” Transgender Memphis woman Kayla Gore is quoted saying that the apparent rise in anti-transgender crime has pushed her and others toward increased personal vigilance: “[An attack] is always at the forefront of our minds, when we’re leaving work, going to work, going to school.” ABC News’s account contains similar language, with the authors stating: “For transgender women of color, every day is a fight for survival.”

But is this an accurate summary of the dangers transgender people face? The Human Rights Campaign maintains a year-by-year database containing every known case of a transgender individual being killed by violent means, and gives this number as 29 in 2017, 26 in 2018, and 22 in 2019. Not only do these figures not reflect a year-by-year increase in attacks on trans persons—they are remarkably consistent, and may be trending slightly downwards—they also indicate that the trans murder rate is significantly lower than the murder rate for Americans overall.

Let’s crunch the numbers. Taking the HRC’s highest recent estimate of trans fatalities (29) as representative, and assuming the transgender population to be 0.6 per cent of the U.S. population—although some trans activists argue the true figure is as high as 3 per cent, which would make the murder rate even lower—the total number of murders in a hypothetical all-trans USA would be roughly 4,800 per year (4,833). In other words, if

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you multiply the population of the US (327,167,434) by 0.6 per cent you get a current transgender population estimate of 1,963,004.6, and if you divide that figure by 29 (the number of murders) you get 67,690—one murder per 67,690 trans citizens. That works out as a projected annual total of 4,833 murders (327,167,434/67,690) in an all-trans America, with an annual murder rate of 1.48 per 100,000 Americans. That's about one-fourth of the actual current murder rate: there were 16,214 recorded homicides in the United States in 2018 (five per 100,000) and 17,294 in 2017. While LGBT advocates may be correct that there is some under-reporting of the transgender murder rate because not all trans individuals are “out,” the fact is that the murder rate for trans people would have to increase by 300-400 per cent to match the murder rate for the general population.

The absence of a homicide “epidemic” for transgender people becomes even more apparent when we compare trans murder totals not merely to the population overall, but to specific high-mortality groups within it. The most vulnerable of these is my own group, African Americans. According to the FBI, of the 14,123 murders in 2018 in which the original police agency to investigate provided demographic information about the victim, 6,088 involved a white victim and 7,407 involved a black victim. Given that blacks make up only 12-13 per cent of the American population, we can see that the black murder rate—which I calculate at one murder per 5,298 persons, or 18.88 per 100,000—is roughly six times the Caucasian rate and almost 13 times the allegedly “epidemic” transgender murder rate.

African Americans are hardly alone among Americans in being disproportionately likely to be murdered. Looking at the “middle tables” of the FBI’s 2018 Crime in the United States report—such as Table Six, which breaks serious crime down by region and metropolitan statistical area (MSA) within states—it seems virtually certain that murder rates for young Latino or “poor white” men, among other population groups, are an order of magnitude higher than the rate for trans persons. While that’s an estimate, it is a matter of record that the murder rate for all males—one per 14,981 citizens, or 6.68 per 100,000—was 454 per cent higher than the transgender murder rate in 2018. In fact, the murder rate for trans women (and trans men) appears to be on par with the murder rate for women overall.

Not only is there no “epidemic” of murders of transgender individuals, it’s also not true that most trans murders are motivated by “hate.” The first case I reviewed while researching this article, that of Claire Legato, involved a trans woman killed while attempting to break up a physical dispute over a financial debt between her own mother and a close family friend. This was not atypical. The conservative writer Chad Greene, himself a member of the LGBT community, recently reviewed a sample

of 118 of the cases of anti-trans homicide compiled by the Human Rights Campaign. His conclusion: exactly four of the perpetrators were clearly motivated by “anti-trans bias,” animus, or hatred. In contrast, 37 of the murders were due to domestic violence, and 24 involved sex workers and were largely the result of the dangerous working conditions associated with illegal sex work. More than a few others were essentially random acts of violence: one of the victims in Greene’s data set was Jordan Cofer, the transgender man murdered by the Dayton Shooter. (Greene’s work can be found [here](#).)

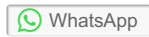
In addition to not being hate crimes, the majority of transgender murders are intra-racial. According to Greene, whose conclusions align with my own analysis, 34 of the 37 identified murderers of black trans persons killed between 2015 and 2019 (89.5 per cent) are themselves black. The same holds true for the killers of white trans individuals: in seven of nine such murders during the period under review, the perpetrator was Caucasian. Even among Hispanics, who can be of any race and can identify as members of more than one ethnic group, at least four of the eight individuals responsible for recent fatal attacks on Hispanic trans persons were themselves explicitly identified as Hispanic or Latino.

There is no reason any of this should be surprising. It is widely known among criminologists and political scientists that, for all the media furor about inter-racial crimes, the significant majority of serious crime is intra-racial. Inner-city shooters and tough “rednecks” almost never travel to attack one another. From 1980 through to the modern era, according to PolitiFact, 85 per cent of white murder victims have been killed by other whites, and 93 per cent of black murder victims have been killed by other blacks. What is true for all Americans appears to also be true of trans people.

The truth is there is no epidemic of transgender murders. The recorded transgender murder rate is 1/3 or less of the overall murder rate for all American citizens and legal residents. Further, when such murders do occur, few are motivated by hatred and roughly 80 per cent are same-race killings. These statements are not “arguments” or “allegations” but simply declarations of factual truth. And in an environment where journalists such as Andy Ngo risk being banished from social media for simply stating these facts, it is important to reiterate a statement of principle that has been a cornerstone of science since Galileo: no one should be punished for telling the truth.

**Wilfred Reilly is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Kentucky State University. He is the author of *Hate Crime Hoax* and the upcoming *Taboo: Ten Facts You Can't Talk About*.**

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## Comments



neoteny

Let's crunch the numbers.

Math is the *tool* of white cishetero shitlords.



Geary\_Johansen2020

I love this sort of data-driven reasoning, used to disprove the deranging influence of media narratives. In many ways, it reminds me of Roland Fryer and his excellent work that showed that given crime incidence rates and contrary to the flawed availability heuristics people have been using since 2012 to calibrate their worldviews, there was no epidemic of white police officers shooting black unarmed men- and instead, if you were a white unarmed man in a situation which a police officer perceived as life-threatening to themselves, or to members of the public, you were *twice* as likely to be shot, as an unarmed black man.



Geary\_Johansen2020

*BloggheadsTV* did a great piece on it on YouTube, by *Glenn Loury* and *John McWhorter*. Their arguments were that he didn't kiss enough ass within the faculty and was of the wrong socio-economic class for polite society. They also mentioned that the *NYT* hit piece, which specifically left out the provocative unsolicited texts from his subordinate, probably didn't help. My own personal theory is that he was nobbled, because he was close to published a study showing that the withdrawal of proactive policing strategies, specifically in relation to Justice Department Consent Decrees, was leading to massive violent crime rises amongst high crime marginalised communities... There was a lot of motivation to silence him.



**MorganFoster**

In fact, the transgender murder rate is far lower than the murder rates for African Americans, poor Americans of all races, and “men” in general.

Evidence of privilege, then?



**RayAndrews**

Stop that! The HRT has taken notice of even such throw away remarks as yours, they expose an impure mind.

Anyway, it’s not exactly relevant to this thread, but I am happy to report that there’s no epidemic of trans-species violence because so far no one has killed me. However I have had my feeling hurt. Who will dry my tears?



**Stephanie**

One has to wonder how anyone can look at 20-something murders a year and call that an epidemic with a straight face. But considering these are the same people who call biologically-correct pronoun usage “erasing trans people,” the melodrama and emotional instability should be expected.



**RayAndrews**

You mean ... he thinks it’s a real girl? And money changes hands and then ... really? Well he would be a bit steamed wouldn’t he? And who would be so foolish as to engage in such business and expect to survive the night? I have supposed that if a trannie is selling something it is with the understanding that the seller is a trannie.



**MorganFoster:**

Were you swimming in Japanese waters, it might be a very different story.

Well yes and no. What goes on over there is just plain vanilla murder, it’s not Hate.



**Stephanie:**

the melodrama and emotional instability should be expected

... even manufactured as with Jussie. If you’re not being oppressed enough, arrange it.



**Ike**

It's interesting how "shining light" on police shootings of unarmed African Americans has uncovered data counter to the narrative put forward by groups like BLM. These groups wanted transparency, they got it, the results are in, and there's virtually no reason for them to continue addressing police shootings on a racially demographic basis unless they want to start advocating for white people. Which they don't.

The data from WaPo and the FBI Universal Crime Report together show another discrepancy in the narrative. Whites involved in a violent felony arrest are 4 times more likely to be shot and killed than blacks. The reason more blacks are killed per capita in these scenarios simply comes from a higher number of violent felonies being committed by blacks.

Also, when you subtract the number of Hispanic or Latino numbers (which are combined into the white category) the discrepancy grows even more.

Debunked but not derailed, when approached with these facts, it's usually a quick retreat into the subjective feeling of how one perceives the police as an African American and how awful it is.

The recent article in quillette on media exposure to mass shootings shaping ones anxiety around such events actually happening is probably a relevant theory to apply in this factually devoid narrative. What can one do though? Presenting the data to an emotionally shut down listener is hardly a solution.



**Farris**

There is no epidemic of transgender murders. There is no epidemic of campus rapes. White police officers are not routinely shooting black citizens with impunity. There was not a rash of racially motivated black church burnings in the 1990s.

"Never let a crisis go to waste." Rob Emmanuel

The news cycle has become an endless string of manufactured crisis. This is the reason Trump's assertion of "Fake News" has credence. Good rule of thumb the proponent of the doomsday or crisis arguments, is generally the side lacking actual facts. Claiming opponents are one's impediment to saving the world is a sign of a messiah complex.



**neoteny**



Farris:

White police officers are not routinely shooting black citizens with impunity.

True, but it is also true that there were some outrageous cases where there was no condemnation of the officer's deeds.

Claiming opponents are one's impediment to saving the world is a sign of a messiah complex.

That's excellent insight.



**Farris**

Thank you for your input. It was not my intention to claim there were no egregious cases of white police officers killing black citizens but rather to challenge that such occurrences are routine.



**HalifaxCB**



**RayAndrews:**

People point out that Trump is the biggest liar in history

Ill informed people say all kinds of things; that doesn't make them true. For my money the most consequential liar among American presidents was LBJ, especially with his

We are not about to send American boys 9 or 10 thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.

while making preparations to do just that.



**DOK**

I guess that'll come down to what "biggest" means. There are big lies, and frequent/repetitive ones. Either way, political, ideological and religious leaders make it the norm because most people prefer their lives with lies they like than the truth. They prefer authority to tell them what's prohibited and wants compulsory so as to simplify their unexamined lives. Liberty is hard. Equal protection is hard.



**strngr12**



**RayAndrews:**

If you're not being oppressed enough, arrange it.



Someone said, the demand for racism in the US is much higher than the supply. That could apply here as well.



HalifaxCB



AsenathWaite:

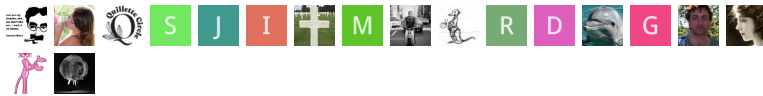
It seems more likely to be primarily a result of trans people tending to engage in riskier behaviors than the average American.

That's an important point. Out of curiosity, I looked up the homicide rate for sex workers in general; according to this Wikipedia article it's 204 per 100,000 for women. I don't know what it is for male sex workers. For the average population, it's 5.3 per 100,000. But we don't know how many transgendered people are sex workers, and we don't know how many of those killed were working in the sex trade, so it seems that we are missing some pretty basic information.

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